

Message Text

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ACTION ARA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY BUENOS AIRES

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 0023

C O N F I D E N T I A L BUENOS AIRES 1240

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, AR

SUBJ: ROCAMORA AND LOPEZ REGA AS RIVALS

REF: BA 1110

1. THE EMBASSY IS NOW CONVINCED THAT INTERIOR MINISTER ROCAMORA'S RELATIVELY GREATER PROMINENCE AND MORE AGGRESSIVE ATTITUDE OF THE PAST FEW WEEKS (SEE REF) DO NOT REPRESENT SIMPLY A DIVERSIONARY TACTIC TO DRAW ATTENTION AWAY FROM LOPEZ REGA'S DISPROPORTIONATE INFLUENCE IN GOVERNMENT--A TACTIC MRS. PERON HAS USED IN THE PAST. THEY DO NOT NECESSARILY IMPLY ANY DIMINUTION OF HIS INFLUENCE, HOWEVER; THAT IS SOMETHING STILL TO BE DECIDED. RATHER, THEY RESULT FROM DECISION ON ROCAMORA'S PART TO ASSERT HIMSELF. AS CLAUDIO ESCRIBANO OF LA NACION PUT IT IN HIS COLUMN FEB 23: "FOR SOME 20 DAYS IT HAS BEEN REMARKED THAT DR. ROCAMORA HAS SECURED HIS POSITIONS. PROBABLY IT WOULD BE MORE ACCURATE TO SAY THAT ROCAMORA CAME OUT 20 DAYS AGO TO SECURE HIS RIGHTFUL OPERATING SPACE, AND HE IS STILL ENGAGED IN THAT PROCESS." SINCE IT IS LOPEZ REGA MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE WHO HAS INFRINGED ON THE INTERIOR MINISTERS TERRITORY, THE PROCESS IMPLIES SOME TILTING WITH THE FORMER.

2. FIRST SKIRMISH BETWEEN THE TWO MINISTERS SEEMS TO BE SHAPING UP IN CORDOBA AND IS BEING ARTICULATED LARGELY THROUGH PAWNS. PERONIST PARTY INTERVENTOR ARMANDO CASAS NOBLEGA REPRESENTS
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ROCAMORA AND THE MODERATES. EMBASSY NOW HAS INFORMATION

THAT LACABANNE HAS BROKEN COMPLETELY WITH COL. OSINDE AND THROWN IN WITH LOPEZ REGA, THUS BECOMING THE LATTERS PRINCIPAL PWN THERE. THE LINES BETWEEN THE TWO GROUPS ARE FAIRLY CLEARLY DRAWN. JULIO ANTUN, RIGHT-WING PERONIST LEADER IN CORDOBA WHO BACKS LACABANNE, HAS PUBLICLY ANNOUNCED, FOR EXAMPLE, THAT HE NO LONGER RECOGNIZES CASAS NOBLEGA'S AUTHORITY AND HAS REORGANIZED UNIFIED JUSTICIALISTA COMMAND, WHICH THE PARTY INTERVENTOR HAD EARLIER CAUSED TO BE DISBANDED. MATTERS SEEMD TO BE COMING TO A HEAD LAST WEEK WHEN CASAS NOBLEGA CALLED FOR A PUBLIC CEREMONY ON FEB 23 TO COMMEMORATE PERON'S FIRST ELECTION TO PRESIDENCY IN 1946. ANTUN AND COL. NAVARRO (WHO LED POLICE UPRISING AGAINST GOVERNOR OBREGON CANO AND IS NOW BACK IN CORDOBA) COUNTERED BY CALLING FOR A CEREMONY ON FEB 27 TO COMMEMORATE FIRST ANNIVERSARY OF POLICE REVOLT. CASAS NOBLEGA INDICATED HE WOULD NOT COUNTENANCE HOLDING OF SECOND, AND REPORTEDLY, LACABANNE PRIVATELY SUGGESTED HE MIGHT NOT ISSUE PERMIT FOR FIRST. PROBLEM WAS SOLVED TO NO ONES SATISFACTION WHEN PERONIST SUPERIOR COUNCIL ISSUED A LETTER WHICH INDICRECTLY FORBADE BOTH MEETINGS. MODERATES CAME OUT SOMEWHAT AHEAD, HOWEVER, SINCE ARMY CALLED NAVARRO TO BUENOS AIRES AND PRIVATELY REPRIMANDED HIM FOR IRRESPONSIBLE INTERVENTION IN POLITICAL AFFAIRS.

3. AT THIS POINT, IN BROADER PICTURE, LOPEZ REGA APPEARS TO BE STILL FIRMLY IN SADDLE. HOWEVER, ROCAMAOA MAY HAVE GAINED SOME GROUND. REPORTEDLY, AT CABINET MEETING LAST WEEK MRS. PERON SHOWED GREAT DEFERENCE TO HIM. FURTHER, SHE POINTEDLY STATED AT SAME MEETING THAT HER DOOR ALWAYS OPEN TO ANY MEMBER OF CABINET WHO WISHED TO SEE HER; THEY NEED ONLY CALL HER DIRECTLY, SHE SAID (I.E. RATHER THAN GOING THGOUGH LOPEZ REGA). IT WILL TAKE MORE THAN AN INVITATION FROM THE PRESIDENT TO GET AROUND HER PRIVATE SECRETARY, HOWEVER. AS ONE UCR MEMBER PUT IT RECENTLY: "WHEN LOPEZ REGA STANDS IN THE PRESIDNETS DOORWAY, HE IS TRANSFORMED INTO AN IMPENETRABLE MASS."

4. LOPEZ REGAS JOUST WITH ROCAMORA ASIDE, HE IS COMING IN FOR MORE OPEN CRITICISM FROM BOTH LEFT AND RIGHT. ON FEB 21 RAUL ALFONSIN, LEADER OF THE LEFT WING OF THE UCR, PUBLICLY DESCRIBED THE SOCIAL WELFARE MINISTER AS "AN ARBITRARY POLE OF POWER IN A GOV'T WHICH SEEMS TO HAVE LESS AND LESS TO DO WITH CONFIDENTIAL

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PERONISM." AND MARCHAR, A WEEKLY RIGHT-WING NATIONALISHT PUBLICATION OF PATRICIO KELLY'S, AND CABILDO, A MONTHLY PUBLICATION EVEN FURTHER TO THE RIGHT, WERE BOTH CLOSED LAST WEEK AFTER HAVING CRITICIZED LOPEZ REGA. INDEED, MARCHARS CRITICISM WAS SO BITING THAT THE GOV'T ALSO ISSUED AN ARREST ORDER FOR KELLY.

5. ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE LEDGER, ONE REPORT MAKING THE

ROUNDS OF POLITICAL CIRCLES LAST WEEK WAS THAT JOSE CAMPANO MARTINEZ, ARGENTINAS AMBASSADOR IN MADRID, HAS AGAIN BEEN CALLED HOME. ONE VERSION IS THAT HE HAS BEEN SUMMONED BY LOPEZ REGA, POSSIBLY AS A REPLACEMENT FOR ROCAMORA, WHOM LOPEZ REGA HAS DECIEDD HE MUST DEFENESTRATE. THIS IS ONLY SPECULATION, HOWEVER. EVEN IF CAMPANO HAS INDEED BEEN ASKED TO COME BACK, SO FAR NO ONE KNOWS WHETHER HE WILL COME OR FOR WHAT PURPOSE.
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